

CORRESPONDENCE

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ON THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—As I was for five years a practitioner in Notting Hill, I would like to comment on points made by James Gregor.*

His opinion that man always has, and (almost) always will, share with all social animals a tendency to racial exclusiveness "as the obverse of preferential association", is poorly sustained by his text. Though he cites sixty-two references, nearly all his historical examples refer to more or less developed societies, in which other social and political antagonisms serve to perpetuate and even initiate prejudice. Apart from these, he refers only to insects, anthropoid apes, and "primitives" (whatever that may mean), and to the latter once only in quite general terms.

As his whole case rests on an alleged innate psychological trend, not primarily dependent on education or miseducation, one would expect some analysis of existing tribal and nomadic societies, where class divisions are developed little or not at all. How does he explain the traditions of friendship and hospitality to outsiders, and in many cases of intra-tribal taboos which actually compel marriage outside the kinship group? Even at later stages of inter-tribal warfare and conquest, our own history shows a rapidity of assimilation of the invading or conquered group which argues strongly against any universal exclusion of those outside the tribe as "not men".

Even contemporary examples of racially mixed but utterly tolerant communities are ignored, for instance the whole of the British West Indies; and no analysis whatever is made of the effect of deliberate attempts to perpetuate or initiate racial superstitions for political and class motives (Germany, South Africa), or of social factors which obstruct serious measures against them (U.S.A.).

As long as racial superstition persists, it will be used by some politicians, and deplored as original sin by the more passive sociologists. But like public hanging, slavery and capital

punishment for children, it will in time be utterly discredited, because of active and informed opposition. Despite the very best intentions, Mr. Gregor neither activates nor informs, and above all grossly underestimates what can be done when the will and the belief are really there.

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To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—It is difficult indeed to provide a brief rejoinder to Dr. Tudor-Hart's well intentioned remarks, largely because I am not at all sure what his objections are.

First, he charges me with maintaining that man shares with all social animals a tendency to "racial exclusiveness", something I did not pretend to do. Then he scolds me for not having sustained such a notion. What I clearly said was that man shared with social animals the disposition to identify with only select members of its own species. I went on to maintain that among *men* one manifestation of such preferential association was racial preference.

Secondly, the good Doctor objects that I have not discussed the phenomena of preferential association among "primitives". Since he had the candour to add that he did not know what the term "primitive" meant, I should have imagined this would have tempered his criticism. As the term is generally understood it would include the Tuareg and Fulani (referred to in the text when it was germane to the discussion) and certainly, even the strictest definition, would include the ancient Aryan invaders of India, the Papuans and the natives of Mexico. Dr. Tudor-Hart objects that I do not refer to any specific primitives—but when I do he does not recognize the reference.

That the article does not concern itself, specifically, with exclusiveness as it manifests itself among the most primitive of peoples is a consequence of the fact that sociologists

* THE EUGENICS REVIEW, 1961, 52, 4.

generally agree that peoples on this level of sociocultural organization are "ethnocentric", i.e., "in-group orientated". No case was made because it was not felt necessary to make one. I refer Dr. Tudor-Hart to any standard sociology handbook.

On the other hand it is generally the case that contemporary sociologists contend that "sophisticated" societies are innocent of these "primitive" behaviour traits. My argument is simply that this "disposition" to preferential association takes on different forms, with unabated intensity, in complex societies.

As to marriage taboos among primitives, these taboos generally operate interclan but *intratribally* as well, and as such would not affect the exclusiveness of the inclusive "marriage circle".*

As to the "rapidity" of the assimilation of conquered or conquering groups the whole of history argues *against* this notion.†

I have cited a number of the most interesting instances of the tensions generated by such attempts at assimilation within the body of the text under discussion.

With respect to the relationship of primitive groups to individual strangers it can be said that it is of a different cast than the relationship between groups. Any standard work in sociology can better answer Dr. Tudor-Hart's question than I could within the confined limits of this rejoinder.

That there are compelling instances of racial accommodation I mentioned in passing. But the

British West Indies hardly constitute a good example. Anyone familiar with the social dynamics of race relations in the area is cognizant of the difficulties attending them.‡

The fact that these tendencies to preferential association and exclusion are exploited is quite beside the point. The question is one of priority. Do "politicians", or "class ideologists" *create* this disposition or do they simply utilize it? This is discussed in my report on the XIXth International Congress of Sociology in *Mankind Quarterly* (October, 1960. I, 2).

Finally, it must be said that since this disposition can manifest itself as tribal, class, cultural, national or racial distinctiveness, education must play a critical role in its expression. The article was not concerned with the function of education in this process. Such a consideration warrants more than a brief article. The article was concerned with the pervasiveness and intensity of the disposition to preferential association and attendant exclusiveness.

Our principal danger does not threaten us in the form of "passive sociologists", but threatens us in the form of those disposed to leap before they look.

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EVOLUTION

To the Editor, The Eugenics Review

Sir,—Since reading a review of *The Phenomenon of Man* by the Reverend D. Sherwin Bailey, published in THE EUGENICS REVIEW of October, 1960 (52, 3) I have re-read this remarkable work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Although as Fr. Teilhard warns us, the book, to be properly understood, must be read "Purely and simply as a scientific treatise", I think it must be admitted that it has certain philosophic, speculative, metaphysical and theological aspects which are of the greatest interest to the lay reader. From a theological point of view the book (as far as I am aware) has broken entirely new ground, and it would seem to me that we have only three alternatives to adopt:

* cf. L. C. Dunn, *Race and Biology* (1951); even Engels had to grant this, cf. *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in Marx, *Engels Selected Works* (1955), II, p. 243.

† I refer Dr. Tudor-Hart to Oppenheimer's *The State* as a ready reference or to the more detailed discussion in C. Gini, "El Problema de la Asimilacion Cultural," *Revista de la Facultad de Ciencias Economicas de la Universidad Nacional de Cuyo* (May-August, September-December, 1955).

‡ cf. T. Simey, "Adjustment Problems of Negro and Immigrant Elites," *Race Relations in World Perspective* (1955), pp. 294 f.; C. Hadley, "Personality Patterns, Social Class and Aggression in the British West Indies," *Human Relations* (1949).

See also the words of the Bishop of Jamaica quoted in the Note of the Quarter (p. 71) headed "Control of Immigration". EDITOR